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FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3963
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4234
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2948
RUEHLD/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1327
RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY 2654
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 2913

EXDIS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: OREP, PEPR, IZ
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENTIAL INTERPRETER MAZEN ZAHAWI

1. CONFIDENTIAL ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION, AUG 29, SADDAM HUSSEIN'S ENGLISH
LANGUAGE INTERPRETER, MAZEN ZAHAWI, MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

~~CODEL SOLARZ~~ VISIT: SADDAM HUSSEIN WAS VERY FAVORABLY
IMRESSED BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ. ZAHAWI NOTED THAT THIS
WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS THAT AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL
HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY AN IRAQI PRESIDENT. HE EMPHASIZED THAT
OTHER SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND CONGRESSMEN WOULD BE
WELCOME IN BAGHDAD AND WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED. SADDAM
HUSSEIN FELT THAT SOLARZ HAD PUT HIM ON THE SPOT WITH A
NUMBER OF QUESTIONS, BUT HE ENJOYED AND APPRECIATED
THE FRANK EXCHANGE. ZAHAWI SAID THAT MY FAILURE TO
GAIN ADMISSION TO THE MEETING WAS CAUSED BY MISTAKEN
SIGNALS NOT BY DESIGN. THE TWO CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS
AND I HAD BECOME SEPARATED FROM SOLARZ AND NAIM HADDAD
AND HENCE THE MEETING WAS ALREADY UNDERWAY WHEN WE AR-
RIVED. (I MENTION THIS BECAUSE WE AND OTHER LOCALLY
HAD INTERPRETED THE IRAQI FAILURE TO INVITE ME INTO THE
MEETING AS AN INDICATION OF IRAQI RELUCTANCE ASSOCIATED
WITH THE ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS).

3. IRAQI IRAN WAR: ZAHAWI INDICATED THAT THE IRAQI
LEADERSHIP SEES A GLIMMER OF HOPE RE THE POSSIBILITY THAT
IRAN MIGHT TURN TO A PEACE PROCESS RATHER THAN TRY TO
CARRY THE WAR INTO IRAQ. THIS SEEMS TO BE BASED ON THE
DELAY OF THE EXPECTED IRANIAN OFFENSIVE, THE PROVEN
SUPERIORITY OF IRAQI AIRPOWER, AND THE REMOVAL OF AN
IRRITANT WITH THE CANCELLATION OF THE BAGHDAD NON-ALIGNED MEETING.

4. US-IRAQ RELATIONS: ZAHAWI NOTED THAT THE PREVIOUS
WEEK HAD BEEN "AMERICAN WEEK IN BAGHDAD" WITH CHRISTINE
HELMS' (BROOKINGS) MEETING SADDAM HUSSEIN, FOLLOWED BY
CODEL SOLARZ' WELL-PUBLICIZED VISIT. (TODAY'S AL THAWRA

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State Dept. review completed

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CARRIES A HALF PAGE INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE HELMS). ZAHAWI REITERATED IRAQ'S DESIRE TO RENEW DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES "AS SOON AS THE WAR IS OVER." IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT HE REFERRED TO HOPE THAT A SETTLEMENT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE SOON. MEANWHILE HE NOTED IRAQ'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS AND RECALLED THAT IF SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, HE WOULD HAVE GONE TO NEW YORK AND WOULD HAVE WELCOMED AN INVITATION TO WASHINGTON TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN.

5. THE ARAB SUMMIT: ZAHAWI SAID THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN'S DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ATTEND AN ARAB SUMMIT IN MOROCCO WILL DEPEND ON THE WAR SITUATION HERE AND ON THE RESULTS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS PREPARATORY MEETING AND THE AGENDA ADOPTED. HE INDICATED THAT NO IRAQI POSITION RE THE FAHD PLAN HAD YET BEEN ADOPTED. HE IMPLIED THAT IF THE PLO SUPPORTS THE PLAN, SO WOULD IRAQ, OR AT THE LEAST IRAQ WOULD NOT OPPOSE IT.

EAGLETON

END OF MESSAGE

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